

Troops of the Week

Name: Seaman Ana R. Venegas
Unit: EMU
Job: Hospital Corpsman
Billet: Non-commissioned Officer in Charge of Small Pox vaccination program
Hometown: Los Angeles, Calif.
Age: 20
Favorite Water: Oasis
Favorite Food at DFAC: Lasagna
Favorite Thing to do Here: Working at the aid station
Recent Accomplishment: Service member of the month for CJTF-HOA.

Seaman Venegas graduated from high school and quickly was sent to basic training in August 2002 from Los Angeles. She went to basic training at Recruit Training Center at Great Lakes, Ill. Upon completion of basic training she was sent to A School at the Naval Hospital Corps School, also in Great Lakes. She spent nearly six months learning "everything from basic EMT stuff to nursing, how to give shots and sick call," she said.

From there, Venegas received orders to report to the Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Fl, April 21, 2003.

"I liked it. I worked at labor and delivery. I was the corpsman who took care of the delivery of babies for the first hour of their lives," Venegas said.

Four months later, she left for Camp Lemonier. She enjoys life at the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, but said she wishes it wasn't so far from home.

She said the most rewarding part of her job is knowing that she is able to help others.

"When you are walking down to your tent or are at the chow hall eating, you think, 'I just helped that person today,' and you know you did something, even if it was just giving a bandaid."

Photo Illustration by G. Lane Miley

Seaman Ana R. Venegas

Fatherhood from page 4

Wimbrough, regimental command sergeant major, with facilitating the experience.

"It was really comforting for them to let us know that people on a higher level care not just about us being good soldiers but also about our families too," Peterson said.

"It made it easier to go knowing I have leadership that's going to really look after us here," Peterson added.

Even though Peterson was able to see his wife and daughter before deploying, he said he still feels a void without their presence. He said he fills the void by focusing on missions and training and by setting aside a portion of each night to think about Magda and Ariel.

"When the mission's done at the end of the day, I always try to talk to her, and I'm happy when I talk to her. But when it's over, I'm reminded I won't see my baby again for a long time," he said.

Peterson said he offers support to Kern and Meacham to help their feelings of homesickness.

"I talk a lot with Kern and Meacham about the whole situation," Peterson said.

"I knew all three of us were going to have babies pretty close together. I know, for the most part, how they're feeling. I know both of these guys are worried. Luckily, Adam had quite a large baby boy, and things are going to go well for him in his life," Peterson said.

Meacham, Kern and Peterson each said they use the deployment time to reflect upon fatherhood and the lives they wish for their children.

Meacham said he keeps a written journal and photos to show Austin what his father was doing when he was born.

Kern has made a few decisions on the rearing of Adam Jr.

"I definitely want to raise him to play sports, be athletic," Kern said. "I want to raise him with a good Christian background and make sure I'm always there for him, providing everything he needs to have a happy childhood."

Peterson said he thinks of the deployment as his paternal duty, making the world safer for his daughter.

"What we're doing here is making a difference so my baby won't have to go through it in the future," Peterson said.

Trotter agreed, saying the historical significance of the Bravo babies goes beyond the fact the deployment is the first in decades. He said the true historicism is that the Bravo fathers and their comrades are helping eliminate terrorism.

"Those babies haven't heard of 9/11," Trotter said.

"They know nothing yet of al Quada, and, if we continue what we're doing here, al Quada will become nothing more than a page in their fifth-grade history books," Trotter said.

News Briefs

Rugby Players Wanted NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY

Equipment and uniforms will be provided free of charge. Players need only provide personal gear such as cleats and a mouthpiece. A match with the French air base is scheduled for late February, with more matches over the next few months planned. If you are unable to play, but can help with coaching duties, your assistance will also be welcomed.

If you have any questions please contact Capt. King, at 824-4920, 820-919 (c), or via e-mail at kingam@hoa.centcom.mil

Black History Month Committee Meeting Tuesday

February is Black History Month and Camp Lemonier service members starting a committee to plan for the celebration.

Please e-mail Capt. Primm at primmsa@hoa.centcom.mil or attend the planning meeting at Building P-100 in the CG's conference Room at 3 p.m. Tuesday. Call Capt. Primm at 824-2017 for more information.